



West Africa Task Force
Working together to stop illegal fishing



RECORD OF THE 11TH WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE MEETING

Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
22-23 November 2021





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1. Introduction and opening

1.1 Introduction

The West Africa Task Force (WATF) is the Fisheries Committee for the West Central Gulf of Guinea (FCWC) Working Group for monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS). Its key task is to operationalise important MCS agreements of the FCWC, including the 2014 Convention on the Pooling and Sharing of Information and Data on Fisheries in the Zone of the FCWC, and the 2009 FCWC Regional Plan of Action on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing (RPOA-IUU) revised in 2018.

The WATF was formally established in 2015, when the FCWC Conference of Ministers endorsed it and adopted its Terms of Reference (ToR). Since its formation, the WATF has helped to:

- Improve regional information sharing through a regional communications platform;
- Increase MCS cooperation between countries;
- Strengthen national interagency cooperation through National Working Groups (NWG); and
- Support the sharing of intelligence to spur enforcement actions.

The WATF was initially established through a collaboration between the FCWC Secretariat and member countries, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo, in cooperation with a Technical Team (TT) which includes TM-Tracking (TMT) and Stop Illegal Fishing (SIF) under a Norwegian Development Agency (Norad) funded project entitled, 'Fisheries Intelligence and MCS Support in West Africa'.

The first phase of the project supporting the WATF was implemented between 2015 and 2018, and a second four-year phase between 2018 and 2022, is now being implemented. Support from the European Union (EU), through the Economic Community of West African

States (ECOWAS) 'Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa' Project (PESCAO) is also contributing to the funding and activities of the WATF.

One of the key implementing structures of the Task Force (TF) are the bi-annual TF meetings. The eleventh WATF (TF11) meeting was held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire on the 22nd and 23rd November 2021. The hybrid meeting was attended both in-person and virtually by representatives of the six FCWC countries, the FCWC Secretariat, the TT, ECOWAS, the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and International Labour Organization (ILO).

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PROJECT SUPPORTING THE WATF WAS IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN 2015 AND 2018, AND A SECOND FOUR-YEAR PHASE BETWEEN 2018 AND 2022 IS NOW BEING IMPLEMENTED.



1.2 Opening session

The FCWC Secretary General, Mr Seraphin Dedi Nadjé, welcomed participants and thanked the Fisheries Directorate and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire for hosting the meeting. He reiterated that the FCWC promotes inter-state cooperation, with the aim of achieving sustainable fisheries in the region. To achieve these objectives a number of initiatives are underway. These included the establishment of the WATF, instituting a regional vessel monitoring system (VMS), developing a regional observer programme (ROP), supporting joint patrols, and the provision of regional leadership on strategies and policy implementation. Of particular note has been support to promote and implement the Agreement on Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), the first binding international agreement to specifically target IUU fishing.

He emphasised that the meeting was also important to inform the policy discussions to be held in the annual FCWC Conference of Ministers.

Mr. Duncan Copeland, Executive Director of TMT, applauded the efforts and progress of the Member States, noting that MCS work had been difficult to conduct during the COVID pandemic and related restrictions. He emphasized the importance of 2022 as the second phase of Norad funding for the WATF will come to a close and it is therefore a good opportunity to identify past achievements and future needs.

The Inspector General of the Ministry of Fisheries in Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Dadi Seripka Guillaume emphasized the importance of fisheries to the West African sub-region in terms of nutrition and economy. He noted that the success of the WATF was a testament to the efforts of the individual nations and the guidance provided by the FCWC to find effective ways of fighting illegal fishing.

Acknowledging that the management of regional fisheries resources faces many challenges, Mr Guillaume identified low levels of monitoring and common use of fraudulent documents as two significant issues. He commended the efforts to set up the WATF and the recent Regional

Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre (RMCS) established by the FCWC, with funding from the EU. These interventions, if fully implemented, will help improve the management of the fisheries resources in the region and help to fight IUU fishing and associated crimes. Noting the importance of holding face-to-face meetings, Mr Guillaume expressed confidence that the TF11 meeting would help towards the implementation of regional commitments and instruments and build stronger collaborative relations among the FCWC Member States and their partners.



2. Presentations and discussions

2.1 National activities

The FCWC Secretary-General chaired the session. The WATF Member States presented progress on national MCS activities, updates on IUU cases and progress in the implementation of the PSMA.

2.1.1 Togo

Mr. Kossi Ahoedo, Head of MCS, reported that multi-agency national joint patrols, organized by the Prefecture Maritime are being conducted quarterly. The most recent patrol, held on 15 October 2021, arrested a canoe involved in an infraction whilst fishing between Togo and Ghana. The canoe was released without charge due to misunderstanding of the border demarcation between Ghana and Togo. A request was made to FCWC for funds to support the joint patrol activities carried out with the Prefecture Maritime, to make the patrol engagements more productive.

Togo also took part in the Grand African Nemo 2021, under the theme 'Search and Rescue at Sea'. This French-led exercise held in November 2021 took place from Senegal to Angola with participation by 19 African and ten international nations and involved all FCWC Member States.

Togo is ready to participate in the FCWC pilot joint at-sea patrol exercise between Togo and Benin from 29 November to 1 December 2021.

The FCWC regional VMS (RVMS) was installed at the office of the Ministry of Maritime Economy, Fisheries and Coastal Protection on 18 to 19 November 2021. A need for more training to better equip the MCS personnel at the national Fisheries Monitoring Centre, to improve monitoring, vessel inspection and scientific observation was noted.

Togo is carrying out a canoe registration exercise in November and December 2021.

MCS personnel also attended a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) conference held between 9 to 11 November 2021 and participated in trainings organized by ATLAFCO for observers and other stakeholders.

DISCUSSION:

The details of the national multi-agency patrols were discussed, including the process relating to the tasking and priorities of the patrols, and the staffing of the various agencies involved, and how the interaction and cooperation works. Each patrol is conducted with one vessel and all the agencies involved have representatives on board. The fisheries agency sends two officers on-board while a third officer leads a team on the ground, acting as an advisor to aid in decision making. All other stakeholder agencies send their staff to observe this process of decision making.



2.1.2 Ghana

Mr. Papa Yaw Atobrah, Head of MCS, reported that Ghana has engaged in various operational activities as part of its MCS operations. They have received intelligence reports from the FCWC and EJF, and all alerts were investigated including MENG XIN YU YUN 369, a Chinese vessel flagged to Sierra Leone. Due diligence was carried out and following responses from Sierra Leone which showed no discrepancies, the vessel was released after a 19-day detention.

Core ongoing activities include:

- Quayside inspections are carried out on vessels in the ports of Takoradi and Tema.
- Beach combing activities to identify non-compliant gear and equipment.
- An observer is placed on each industrial fishing vessel.
- Monitoring of vessels is carried out via VMS.

Ghana has benefited from a range of trainings, including the RMCSC introductory training on the use of the RVMS, and the RMVS User training carried out by Xsealence Sea Technologies facilitated by the FCWC RMCSC. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a training on MDAP for the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) operational officers. Further training is being pursued by staff of the MCS in database development and management and in analysis of data via Excel. The Ghana MCS also benefitted from the Risk Assessment and Vessel Viewer trainings held in Senegal. Lastly, there was a one-day lecture conducted by the MCS on IUU and fisheries protection at the Ghana Naval Command Training Academy as part of interagency cooperation.

Support on implementation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) is being received from Stop Illegal Fishing under the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) funded project in particular the training and support to use body-worn cameras during inspections. Ghana is also one of the pilot countries benefiting from the PSMA support programme implemented by TMT and Global Fishing Watch (GFW).

Preliminary meetings have been held with the Ghana Port and Harbour Authority and the consultant from SIF to include the MCS department on the e-Booking platform of the port to allow access to information. Risk factors associated with this have been identified and further discussions are to be held.

DISCUSSION:

Enquiries were made about the case of the MENG XIN YU YUN 369, the information received, and the ranges of controls available to be applied by Ghana MCS. Mr. Atobrah stated that, in response to information received before the vessel entered port, entry to port was authorised purely for investigatory purposes, with access to port services denied.

The essence of the database training was elaborated: Mr. Atobrah emphasised that databases are needed to provide access to history of vessels, ownership, and frequency of port visits by vessels. This information is important for compliance agency analysis to enable risk assessment and decision making.

Data exchange is currently focussed on tuna vessels, and a need for similar information sharing on trawlers was identified. An agreement had just been reached to have trawler information shared between Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.

The role of the FCWC RMCSC and the importance of integrating the national VMS, which will enable it function properly, was reinforced.

2.1.3 Benin

Mr. Same Benard Tossi, Head of MCS, detailed ongoing inspection and monitoring of reefers and containers. In-port inspections have been conducted on 31 reefer vessels, arriving from Mauritania and South Africa. Container inspections were conducted with support from UNODC training, and 427 containers have been tracked.

The creation of a new Watercourse Surveillance Brigade is underway to tackle pollution, illegal fishing and marine debris. This is part of the Beninese government's strategy to preserve the country's freshwater and marine resources. Training of 55 personnel has taken place, and speed boats have been acquired. The Brigade does not have the mandate to carry arms and therefore other military agencies are needed to support their trips, however, the military agencies have yet to engage with the programme.

FCWC supported the organization of a joint patrol between Benin and Togo with planning meetings held among the parties involved. The joint patrol is scheduled to take place between 29 November and 1 December 2021. The RMCSC protocol for joint patrols has been sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Navy and feedback is underway. Shared and regional patrols would counter Benin's lack of capacity and equipment for sea surveillance to carry out inspections.

Benin has been involved in FCWC processes and benefited from FCWC support, including:

- A workshop on the ratification of PSMA, which has enabled the department's push for ratification and subsequent submission to FAO.
- Participated in the development and validation of the protocols for the establishment of the RMCSC.
- Received technical and legal support to conduct a review of framework law N° 2014-19 of August 7, 2014, on fishing and aquaculture in the Republic of Benin.

- Technical support was also offered for the development of strategic action plans for 2021 to 2030.
- Received technical and financial support from the FCWC for the acquisition of equipment and establishment of a VMS with subsequent trainings on its use.

Benin participated in a workshop for maritime safety organized by the Kofi Annan foundation for security and peace, and participated in the IKATERE operation which sought to help participants analyse case studies into elements of research and prosecution.

DISCUSSION:

The incidence of containers arriving in Benin from Nigeria were discussed and the process to identify containers for inspection was questioned. All containers with fisheries contents are tracked in collaboration with Mixed Container Control Unit at the Port of Cotonou (UMCC) located at the Port of Cotonou. All details are available and verified for all suspicious vessels. Targeted scans in search of prohibited products such as drugs, weapons and counterfeit goods are conducted by the UMCC and other agencies. When fish product is inspected, samples are examined. All offloading for inspections happens inside the port in the presence of all relevant officers.

Concerning the interagency arrangement in place for the Watercourse Surveillance Brigade and the maritime prefecture, Benin clarified that the brigade was set up by a decree and due to further issues with their mandates and setup, maritime police and navy officers must support in times of enforcement activities.





LIBERIA HAS ESTABLISHED A NATIONAL FOCUS GROUP FOR PSMA IMPLEMENTATION.

2.1.4 Liberia

Mr. Francis Boimah, Head of MCS gave an update on Liberia's MCS activities. With regards to PSMA implementation a national focus group was established. The group has developed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) between the participants, standard operating procedures (SoPs) and the first draft of an implementation strategy for the PSMA which has been analysed locally and sent to the EU for comments.

The National Fisheries and Aquaculture Management and Development Law of 2019 and the Fisheries Regulation of 2020 and National Inspection Plan, including MoUs with all relevant agencies, have also been developed.

Training and technical support is being offered by TMT in analysis of VMS information. Liberia is currently not integrated with the Regional VMS but will address this in the coming months.

The Department of Fisheries and the Maritime authority jointly investigated the Curacao-flagged fishing vessel GURIA, which had alleged IUU activities in Guinea Bissau. Using Basecamp, information was acquired from partners and verification enquiries were sent to Guinea Bissau: the department is waiting to receive feedback.

Liberia is establishing a Collaborative Management Association (CMA) across coastal counties, led by EJF and funded by the EU. A canoe registration exercise has taken place in all nine coastal counties of Liberia, with free fishing nets and Yamaha outboard engines distributed in all fishing communities.

DISCUSSION:

Liberia clarified that currently they do not have the technology available to track canoes, however, enquiries and support is being sought to do this in addition to previous pilot projects conducted and proposals to track canoes via automatic identification system (AIS).

The need for scientific data to inform the workings of the CMA was agreed, and it was confirmed that some studies are underway to analyse the suitability of the waters for shrimp fisheries.

In response to enquiries about checks and controls for vessels moving their operations from Guinea to Liberia, Liberia confirmed that due diligence was undertaken for all vessels applying for licences. Three vessels have recently requested licensing to fish in Liberian waters: these vessels are still in port and haven't commenced operations as the necessary due diligence is still being done.

More information was requested on the patrols being organized by the Liberia MCS to which the following details were given: the patrol launched two weeks ago, and good progress is being made although they are yet to reach the hot zone i.e. the border with Côte d'Ivoire.

A video conference was held with the EU on the yellow card in June and follow up queries have not been received from the EU.



NIGERIA IS MOVING TOWARDS RATIFICATION OF THE PSMA AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING THE SEA FISHERIES ACT.

2.1.5 Nigeria

Mr. Paul Opuama, Head of MCS, reported that their MCS has undertaken an annual re-inspection of their 168 inshore and offshore nationally flagged vessels. Four new vessels were added to Nigeria's fleet and licensed, support for due diligence checks was provided by FCWC, TMT and Benin on the new vessels before they were licensed.

Meetings have been held with the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and other stakeholders on vessel certification, surveying, and registry to aid establishment of the safety of fishing vessels. A five-member committee has been set up to develop an MoU between the Fisheries Department and NIMASA.

Fisheries officials have participated in several trainings and events, these include:

- Implementation of national maritime strategy organised by the Nigeria Navy and UNODC.
- Chatham House conference on maritime security which focus on IUU in the Gulf of Guinea.
- Maritime security course and annual meeting for the training of resource persons on fisheries laws organised by the Nigerian Navy.

Nigeria is moving towards ratification of the PSMA and is in the process of reviewing the Sea Fisheries Act which is to be sent to parliament and is being harmonized with some provisions of the PSMA.

Nigeria has installed VMS in both Lagos and Abuja and received training on VMS from the FCWC.

DISCUSSION:

There was enquiry if all 168 vessels are fitted with a transponder and if the MCS can monitor these fishing vessels. Clarity was given that there is a requirement for all vessels to have transponders and transmit via AIS. A one-year deadline is in place for transponders to be installed.

All vessels licensed to fish off-shore are required to be fitted with a VMS transponder ahead of licensing.



2.1.6 Côte d'Ivoire

Mr. Maxime Diomande, Head of MCS, reported that the department was involved in participatory surveillance which involved major actors in the fishery industry in September 2021. All industrial fishing vessel owners have had accounts created to allow monitoring by VMS. The department has taken a collaborative approach to fighting IUU and to improve the working conditions and safety of fishers.

The Grand African Nemo 2021 project supported the artisanal fisheries sector to fight IUU fishing and enhance their security at sea by providing transponders that were installed on canoes for tracking of their activities. Three solar powered transponders designed for small canoes, have been installed on three canoes. The navigation points with this transponder are updated every 10 minutes and are linked with other CLS solutions that allow for efficient fisheries management and data usage. In partnership with the French Navy, fisheries inspectors played scenarios relating to the fight against IUU to enhance information sharing and technological training.

Progress is being made with PSMA implementation. Currently five decrees are in the adoption process at the level of the General Secretariat of Government, including the decree on the modalities of the MCS to integrate PSMA provisions. This will be aided by personnel from the Fisheries Ministry, Maritime Authority and Port and Harbour Authority. The department will also benefit from an FAO project to support the global programme for the development of capacities for PSMA. A national strategy for the implementation of the PSMA has been developed.

A TMT and GFW project is supporting PSMA implementation in FCWC pilot countries including Côte d'Ivoire. An inception meeting included the launch of the Vessel Viewer application.

Risk analysis procedures to be implemented by interagency units were also presented. This informs decision making and gives officers the chance to better analyse vessels that are within their waters or approaching port.

A joint fisheries inspection was carried out with Liberian authorities in the port of Abidjan on the fishing vessel KAMBAL 3, to check for compliance with laws in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. The initiative was supported by FCWC. Nothing suspicious was found on-board, and there was no reason for further action.

DISCUSSION:

Interest was expressed in the Vessel Viewer application. Currently this technology is being piloted in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in the FCWC region, as well as in Senegal and Kenya. The app will be made more widely available widely once testing is concluded.

Enquiries about the model of transponder installed on small vessels and canoes were expressed, as they may have applicability throughout the FCWC region. The NEMO transponder was piloted in Côte d'Ivoire in 2020 by the VMS supplier in the country, CLS. The robustness and uniqueness of the transponders makes them very good for the region. Also of benefit is the frequency of the transmission of the geographic points that aids in more accurate tracking. The intention is to make access to the product more mainstream after the success of the pilot programme.



TRAINING SESSIONS ARE PLANNED TO FURTHER BUILD CAPACITY ON RISK ASSESSMENT AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL FMCS.



2.2 Technical Team update on WATF 10 recommendations

Mr. Copeland provided an update on the request and recommendations that were agreed at TF10. It was noted that there had been a relatively short interval between the TF10 and TF11 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, and this had impacted on progress made.

2.2.1 Port State measures

Mr Yann Yvergniaux presented the progress made by the countries concerning the implementation of PSMA. PSMA was a key area of support for most countries and an international expert was hired to provide support to the region for its implementation. Online meetings were held with Togo, and Benin. Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire were identified as pilot countries for the new dedicated PSMA support programme.

PSMA implementation will continue to be high on the list of priorities for next year with opportunities to learn from the PSMA implementation strategies of Ghana and Guinea. Lessons learned from the reefer risk assessment and inspections in Togo and Côte d'Ivoire are being shared, to support other Member States to build capacity. Member States requested that a plan should be developed to extend the TMT-GFW PSMA implementation programme beyond the current pilot countries.

Mr Yvergniaux mentioned the WATF commitment to building capacity reiterating that under the WATF there is existing funding to encourage exchanges to enable countries progress in PSMA ratification and implementation. He also noted that national legislation should be reviewed to incorporate PSMA provisions and those of other related instruments.

2.2.2 Management and sustainability of the RMCSC

Mr. Copeland requested that support be provided to all MS to implement the SOPs of the RMCSC in the national FMCs, and to explore ways to engage external partners and MS's support to ensure the sustainability of the RMCSC.



2.2.3 Regional observer programme

The FCWC, under the PESCAO project, developed an initial pilot project for a regional observer programme. Existing national programmes were assessed, and this includes consideration on how to improve and develop the national programmes in conjunction with the new regional observer programme. The main implementing partner on the PESCAO project, the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), is leading an in depth analysis of the pilot project in order to provide the needed support not only to establish the programme but also to train the observers that will be recruited.

DISCUSSION:

The WATF can support the existing national observer programmes based on requests and the availability of funds. Countries are expected to provide feedback to the FCWC on the protocol for the establishment of the Observer Programme by November 2021.

The Technical Team also agreed to support the start-up of the pilot observer programme planned to occur before the end of 2021.

2.2.4 Capacity building

Mr Copeland noted that training sessions are planned for fisheries inspectors to further build their capacity on risk assessment and the establishment of national FMCs. There are also plans to review bunkering activities in the FCWC region to help define recommendations towards a harmonized approach to control such activities.

During the pandemic there was a request by WATF countries to conduct a study on the impacts of the pandemic on fisheries activities. The relevance of the study was considered and there was agreement not to proceed as studies have been conducted at the national level.

Liberia was given technical support in reefer monitoring with two in-country trips and a concept note for a longer term support project with GFW which has been submitted to NaFAA for consideration.

2.2.5 Joint patrols

The Technical Team will continue to expand its technical and intelligence support to the national and regional patrol efforts. Mr Copeland commented that although there is continued and improved cooperation in joint patrols there are obvious gaps between the Navy and fisheries agencies of various countries.

With the cooperation of the UNODC, pre-patrol and live patrol support would be available for the joint patrols of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire and that of Nigeria, Benin and Togo.

2.2.6 Study on importation of fisheries products in Nigeria

ToRs for the study have been developed and approved by the Nigerian Federal Department of Fisheries (FDF) and a national consultant has been hired. Although data is currently being gathered, data from the fisheries companies is yet to be received and analysed. The study is scheduled to be completed in 2022.

2.2.7 Maritime domain awareness platform training

Dedicated training on Maritime Domain Awareness Platforms (MDAPs) has been integrated into patrol and RMCSC training activities, with a focus on both national and free-view software. The intention is to have these integrated into national patrol planning, port control and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) monitoring.



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DEDICATED TRAINING ON MARITIME
DOMAIN AWARENESS PLATFORMS
HAS BEEN INTEGRATED INTO PATROL
AND RMCSC TRAINING.



2.3 FCWC Regional MCS Centre

Mr. Baidoo-Tsibu presented the operations of the FCWC RMCSC, with a focus on the FCWC Member States fishing vessels and on transmission of AIS and VMS vessels. Alerts are being sent from the RMCSC to the countries.

Several Xsealence trainings have been delivered by the RMCSC to the countries:

- Second introductory training on Xsealence RVMS conducted virtually by RMCSC. User Credentials and Seasight application link shared with participants
- Xsealence User Training conducted virtually for FMC operators in MS
- FMC personnel of Togo trained on Seasight by Coordinator of RMCSC after installation of RVMS equipment

The RMCSC has also participated in a series of trainings organised by UNODC and TMT as follows:

- Introduction to Maritime Domain Awareness Platforms
- Using AIS and VMS data
- Working within the concept of multi-agency teams
- Verification of documents and information provided in fisheries law enforcement, and the inspector language cards

A range of challenges are faced by the RMCSC:

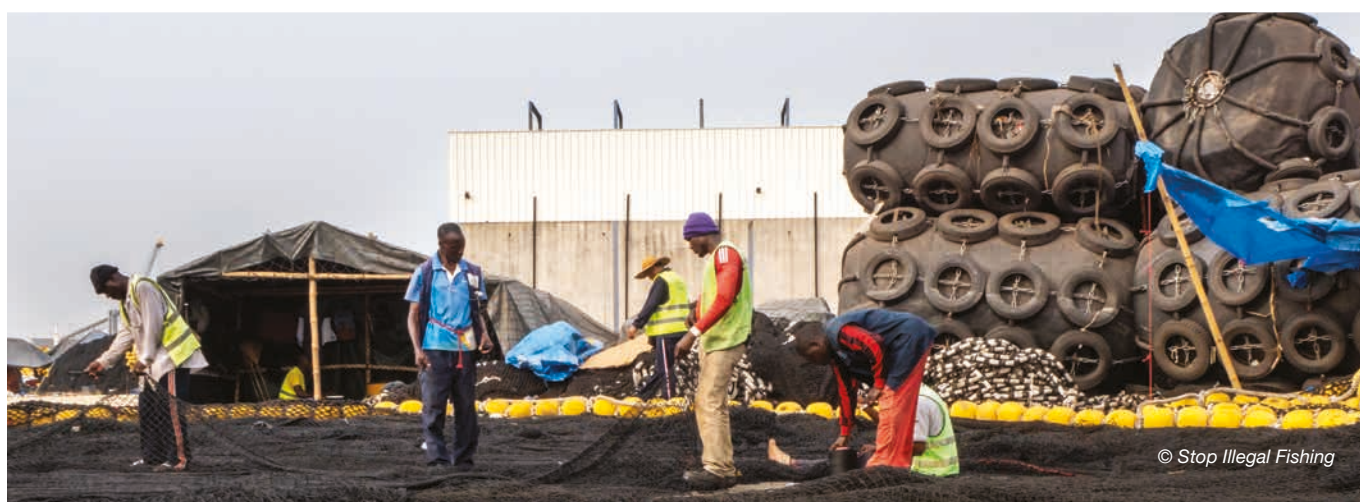
- Low response to integration with the regional VMS by members
- Very low use of RVMS by Member States
- Low staffing (need to recruit Deputy Duty Coordinator, Systems Administrator, Duty Officer)
- Irregular update of national licence lists by Member States

2.4 Collaboration on decent work and labour in fisheries

Ms. Christine Bader and Ms. Alix Nasri from the International Labour Organization (ILO) both presented on the theme of ‘decent work in fisheries’, with a focus on how the ILO and the FCWC can work together. They presented the legal instruments governing decent work and working conditions in the fisheries sector: the International Maritime Organization (IMO)’s Cape Town Agreement (CTA), and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW-F), the FAO PSMA, and the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (C188). Collaboration between FCWC and ILO should be strengthened through the analysis of gaps between the existing legal frameworks for fisheries at MS level and the legal instruments governing decent work.

2.5 Research on work conditions in the fisheries sector in Ghana

Dr. Vanessa Jaiteh, an independent researcher currently being hosted by TM Tracking (TMT) and the FCWC, is conducting a study on the working conditions and safety of fishers in Ghana. There are two current initiatives related to working conditions in West African marine fisheries. Both aim to inform deliberations by countries to ratify and implement international treaties including CTA and C188, and to support national and regional initiatives to combat labour abuses in fisheries which are often linked to IUU fishing.





FCWC AND ILO COLLABORATION SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OF GAPS BETWEEN EXISTING NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS FOR FISHERIES AND THOSE GOVERNING DECENT WORK.

2.6 Update on review and validation of documents agreed at WATF TF10

As agreed at the WATF TF 10 meeting, Member States were to validate the following documents:

- Protocol on joint patrols in the FCWC region
- Protocol on the establishment of regional observer programme, and
- FCWC RMCSC SOPs

Member States gave status reports on progress made concerning the above stated documents:

Benin: copies of the protocol on joint patrols and the observer programme have been sent to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Navy and the Office of Merchant Vessels Operators but are yet to receive feedback from these institutions. No review of the SOPs for the FCWC RMCSC had been done yet but they committed to communicate their input on these documents to the FCWC soon.

Côte d'Ivoire: the protocol on joint patrols has been shared with the Navy and Ports Authority. Feedback from them is awaited before further inputs are made and forwarded to the FCWC. A few clarifications on the observer programme and SOPs are being sought before reverting to the FCWC.

Ghana: a committee was setup to review these documents and have sent back their recommendation to the Executive Director who will take it up to the Minister for further discussion and signature.

Liberia: a committee was setup to review these documents and the results will be communicated to the FCWC soon.

Nigeria: a committee setup to review these documents have sent their feedback on the observer programme to the FCWC. Regarding the SOPs, Nigeria had concerns on only the hot report document and would send feedback about this to the FCWC soon.

Togo: the documents have been circulated to stakeholders, and feedback will be sent to the FCWC soon.

Following the updates, Mr. Dedi reiterated that it would be useful if Nigeria establishes a protocol document to guide the operations of the Abuja and Lagos FMC, in order not to duplicate effort. He encouraged all Member States to use their good will and push these documents to the appropriate offices for validation prior to the 2021 FCWC Conference of Ministers. He clarified that the FCWC will harmonise amendments on these documents from the Member States before the document is adopted.

It was agreed that MS would be given the chance to review the contents of the harmonized versions before adoption is reached.

The SG encouraged all Member States to judiciously use their National Working Groups to ease this process. He further urged them to seek technical and financial support where necessary, as the FCWC and partners are ready to assist.

Côte d'Ivoire shared that have been unable to organise the NWG which has hampered progress. They requested for support and experience-sharing from the other countries. Mr. Dedi advised Côte d'Ivoire to pursue a Ministerial Decree for the establishment of the NWG to be enforced and urged Member States to tackle primary steps first, so experts can lend their support for later steps.

2.7 Training and exchange visits for 2022

Mr. Copeland presented a summary of trainings carried out in 2021 including: virtual trainings focused on the introductory level of MDAP; introductory training on monitoring (limited to Ghana, Nigeria and Liberia); and virtual live support on request. Exchange visits planned for support in 2021 under the WATF Project were not carried out because no formal request was made by any Member State.

For 2022, due to the primary focus on PSMA, there will be an increase in in-country training with a focus on advance request for entry into port (AREP) processes. The implementation of SOPs for the RMCSC and virtual and live support for the FCWC and the Member States are also activities planned for 2022.

Based on a request made by the Director of Fisheries of Benin, the WATF project in the first quarter of 2022 will implement an exchange visit between Benin and Côte d'Ivoire for the inspection of reefers

All Member States were made aware of the training manuals developed by TMT and SIF to build Member States capacities and in the future enable them to train their peers themselves. The following training manuals were presented:

- Photo Manual
- Document Verification Manual
- Vessel Inspection Handbook

More materials will be developed, and there will be coordination with other partners to avoid duplication.

2.8 Update on the TMT-GFW steering committee meeting

Mr. Yann Yvergniaux shared details of the first PSMA support programme steering committee meeting held in Saly, Senegal on 9 to 10 November 2021. The meeting was attended by three of the four pilot countries: Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and by representatives from the FCWC RMCSC, Subregional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) and the Indian Ocean Commission Regional Plan for Fisheries Surveillance (IOC-PRSP). The programme is being implemented by TMT and GFW and is focused on improving the risk-based approach to PSMA implementation. Port profiles are underway to provide baseline information on vessel types, flag States and operational patterns. The Vessel Viewer application is being piloted under this programme and was officially launched during the meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Dedi congratulated TMT and GFW for the initiative and further encouraged Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana to make optimum use of this application during inspections of vessels. Mr. Baidoo-Tsibu in his contribution said that the Vessel Viewer application is a reliable tool which the RMCSC is also using. He further stated that it provides more than one MMSI and contains other additional information to facilitate MCS work and emphasized that Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire should make productive use of the application.

Nigeria and Benin enquired if they may have access to the application, Mr. Copeland responded that the pilot countries are to trial the application and give feedback before access can be given to other countries.

Mr. Dedi inquired on the possibility for the application to be linked to the RMCSC RVMS. Mr. Copeland noted that the App is user-friendly and in the long term will have broader features that will enable it to be integrated to the RVMS and the National VMS as well. Mr. Yvergniaux stated that when the Vessel Viewer application becomes a working version more countries will be given access to it. Mr. Dedi inquired if under the WATF Project a dedicated training programme for the FCWC RMCSC Staff was possible and Mr. Copeland responded that technical support will be provided to the RMCSC staffs.



DUE TO THE PRIMARY FOCUS ON PSMA, THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE IN IN-COUNTRY TRAINING WITH A FOCUS ON PSMA AREP PROCESSES.

2.9 Update on FCWC Conference of Ministers

The WATF members were informed that due to the Covid-19 Pandemic the FCWC couldn't organise a physical meeting in 2020 and due to travel restrictions that are still in place in some countries, the 2021 Conference of Ministers will be organized in a hybrid session (in-person and virtual), with the theme *'using innovative technology to increase oversight for safe, fair and legal fishing'*.

The meeting has been scheduled as follows:

15 to 16 December 2021 – Advisory and Consultative Committee (ACC) technical sessions for the Directors of Fisheries and Experts.

17 December 2021 – the Conference of Ministers.

Invitations were sent to the Member States and partners via email and physical copies were sent through the Head of Aquaculture, during the Working Group on Aquaculture launch meeting in Abidjan. Côte d'Ivoire, the host country for 2021, informed the meeting that preparation is ongoing, and venue has been selected based on the Minister's approval.

The Secretary General encouraged Côte d'Ivoire to invite high level organisations and agencies including FAO, EU delegation, JICA, Navy and Port Authority to participate in the conference either virtually or physically.

3. Recommendations and requests from TF11

3.1 Recommendations

3.1.1 Cooperation and information sharing

- Notes that a first experience of a joint inspection team by Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire inspectors was a success, and Member States are encouraged to replicate and share lessons of this type of joint operation.
- Encourages Member States under an EU yellow card to request assistance in this process from the FCWC as appropriate.
- Encourages the reactivation of the process of formalization of inter-agency cooperation in Member States that have not yet done so. Encourages all countries to ensure that national inter-agency cooperation mechanisms (national working groups) are active.
- Notes that there has been limited progress on the implementation of several recommendations agreed during previous WATF meetings by Member States and encourages more commitment to these processes through national implementation, follow up of regional activities, dialogue with the FCWC, and measures to foster cooperation.

3.1.2 Regional VMS/ RMCSC operationalization

- Encourages Member States to expedite the set-up and operationalization of the VMS and other equipment provided and approve relevant national data integration as soon as possible.
- Encourages Member States to provide feedback on the SOPs and Protocols provided ahead of the Conference of Ministers.
- Encourages the RMCS to keep sharing alerts and information regarding vessels operating in Member States through the regional VMS.

3.1.3 Regional Observer programme and joint patrol

- Comments from each of countries on the protocol for observer programme and the joint patrol were shared and to be integrated to the documents for finalization and signing at the Conference of Ministers.

- Member States are encouraged to organize and conduct joint patrols as the process contributes greatly to the deterrence of IUU activities under FCWC member States jurisdiction.
- The first RMCSC pilot joint at sea patrol between Togo and Benin is commended and the other countries are encouraged to participate and provide any assistance as required.

3.1.4 Implementation of the PSMA

- The pilot countries under the PSMA programme, port led controls are encouraged to provide feedback on the new Vessel Viewer mobile app towards supporting extension to other FCWC Member States in the future.

3.1.5 Exchange programme and capacity building

- Note that technical and financial support is available for exchanges and countries encouraged to make request to benefit from it. Identified exchange areas, targeted personnel, and periods to perform the exchange will be agreed with the technical team and the FCWC Secretariat.

3.1.6 Decent work in fisheries in the FCWC region

- Member States encouraged to ratify the ILO C188 and the CTA to ensure decent working conditions on board fishing vessels and protect fishers from forced labour.
- Strengthen cooperation among agencies including ministries in charge of fisheries and labour and any other ministry involved in the ratification, acceptance and approval of relevant instruments (PSMA, CTA, C188, STCW-F) as well as with workers' and employers' organizations in the sector.
- Encourage Member States to participate fully in a global survey on working and living conditions in fisheries by providing feedback to the questionnaire submitted by FCWC/TMT and partners, and discuss how to improve data collection on forced labour in fisheries together with the ILO.

3.2 Requests

3.2.1 Decent work in fisheries in the FCWC region

- As a new area of interest in the region, ILO is requested to present areas of collaboration with the FCWC at the ACC meeting towards development of dedicated activities in the region.

3.2.2 Operationalization of the RMCSC

- Develop guidelines to make AIS a mandatory licensing condition in FCWC Member States.

3.2.3 Cooperation and information sharing

- Support the reactivation of the process of formalization of inter-agency cooperation in Member States that have not yet done so.
- Support exchanges of personnel on port controls, with an initial exchange to involve Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Benin.

3.2.4 Capacity building and trainings

- Support FCWC personnel to benefit from trainings including trainings covering institutional requirements outside the fisheries technical domain.

3.2.5 Implementation of the PSMA programme

- Present Vessel Viewer at the next Task Force meeting, in cooperation with the pilot countries

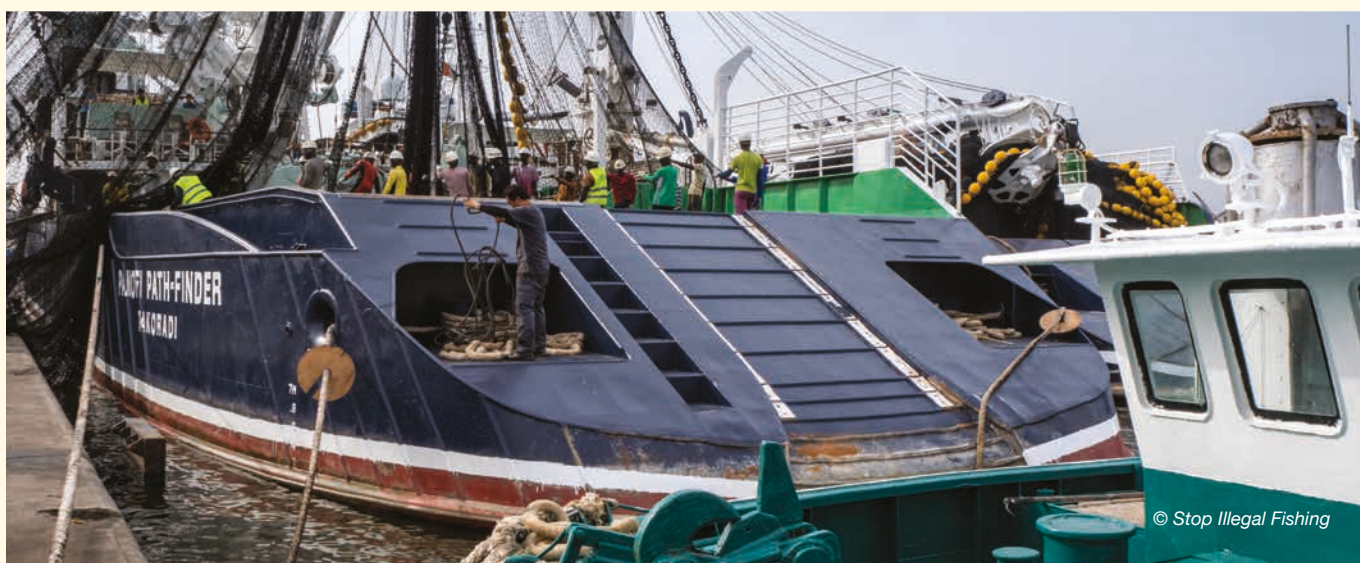


MEMBER STATES ARE
ENCOURAGED TO RATIFY THE ILO
C188 AND THE CTA TO PROTECT
FISHERS FROM FORCED LABOUR.

4. Closing remarks

The FCWC Secretary-General thanked all participants, translators and support staff. He encouraged the Member States to put more effort to their work and submit the strategic documents before the Conference of Ministers. He lauded all the team involved in making the meeting a fruitful success.

Mr Dadi Seripka Guillaume, Inspector General of the Ministry of Fisheries in Côte d'Ivoire, on behalf of the Minister thanked everyone for their participation and encouraged the various institutions to put more effort into the fight against IUU fishing.



5. Annexes

5.1 List of acronyms and abbreviations

AIS	Automatic identification system	NWG	National working group
AREP	Advance request for entry to port	PESCAO	The European Union's 'Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in West Africa' Project
C188	Work in Fishing Convention, of the ILO	PSMA	UN FAO Agreement on Port State Measures
CMA	Collaborative Management Association	RMSCS	Regional Monitoring, Control and Surveillance Centre (of the FCWC)
CTA	Cape Town Agreement	ROP	Regional observer programme
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	RPOA-IUU	Regional plan of action to promote responsible fishing practices including combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone	RVMS	Regional Vessel Monitoring System
EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency	SIF	Stop Illegal Fishing
EU	European Union	SOP	Standard operating procedure
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	SRFC	Subregional Fisheries Commission
FCWC	Fisheries Committee of the West Central Gulf of Guinea	STCW-F	Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
FMC	Fisheries Monitoring Centre	TF	Task Force
GFW	Global Fishing Watch	TF10	Task Force meeting 10
ILO	International Labour Organization	TF11	Task Force meeting 11
IMO	International Maritime Organization	TMT	TM-Tracking
IOC-PRSP	Indian Ocean Commission Regional Plan for Fisheries Surveillance	ToR	Terms of Reference
IUU	Illegal, unreported and unregulated (fishing)	TT	Technical Team
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	UMCC	Mixed Container Control Unit, at the Port of Cotonou
MCS	Monitoring, control and surveillance	UNODC	United Nations Offices on Drugs and Crime
MDAP	Maritime domain awareness platform	VMS	Vessel monitoring system
MoU	Memorandum of understanding	WATF	West Africa Task Force
NIMASA	Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency		
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration		
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation		

5.2 Workshop agenda

22nd November 2021

08:30 – 09:00	REGISTRATION
09:00 – 10:00	OPENING SESSION – Secretary-General Seraphin Dedi, Duncan Copeland, Col. Bina <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome by FCWC Secretariat • Remarks from the WATF Technical Team • Opening by the Director of Fisheries Cote-d'Ivoire • Introduction of participants • Adoption of Agenda • Group photo
10:00 – 10:20	COFFEE BREAK
10:20 – 12:30	WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS – Countries representatives <p>National Presentations by Country Representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent MCS operational activities • Update on cases • Update on joint patrols (Togo – Bénin) • Update on the implementation of the PSMA (countries strategies and action plans)
12:30 – 13:30	LUNCH
13:30 – 14:00	WEST AFRICA TASK FORCE COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS. CONT. – Countries representatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on regional centre progress – Godfrey Baidoo-Tsibu • Integration with national VMS systems – Ere Walson Ayebaine • Update, requests, needs and challenges
14:00 – 14:30	WATF TECHNICAL TEAM UPDATE – Viviane Koutob <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TF10 recommendations • Update on national focus programmes
15:00 – 15:15	COFFEE BREAK
15:15 – 16:00	FCWC REGIONAL MCS CENTRE – Godfrey Baidoo-Tsibu <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fleet status • Alerts • Trainings • 2022 planning • Update, requests, needs and challenges <p>Discussion</p>
16:00	END OF THE DAY

23rd November 2021

09:00 – 09:10 **DAY 1 RECAP**

09:10 – 09:40 **COLLABORATION ON DECENT WORK IN FISHERIES**

- ILO and the FCWC: how can we work together?
 - Christine Bader and Alix Nasri, International Labour Organization (ILO)

09:40 – 10:10 **COLLABORATION ON DECENT WORK IN FISHERIES (CONT.)**

- Research on working conditions in the FCWC region (Ghana)
 - Vanessa Jaiteh, independent researcher

10:10 – 11:00 **UPDATE ON FCWC BROAD ACTIVITIES – FCWC Secretariat**

- Documents validation
 - Review and validation of Protocol on joint patrols in the FCWC region
 - Protocol on the establishment of Regional Observer programme
 - FCWC/RMCSC SOPS

11:00 – 11:15 **COFFEE BREAK**

11:15 – 11:45 **UPDATE ON THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE 13TH FCWC CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS – FCWC Secretariat**

- TF reporting to the Conference of ministers – Technical team
- Discussion

11:45 – 12:45 **PORT PROGRAMME UPDATE – Yann Yvergniaux**

- Update on first Steering Group meeting
- Introducing the port risk assessment concept: objective and methodology
- Case of the Abidjan Port/Tema port
- Discussion

12:45 – 13:30 **LUNCH**

13:30 – 14:30 **TRAINING – Duncan Copeland**

- Review of 2021 Sessions
- Looking Ahead to 2022
- Review of existing manuals
- Introduction of new manuals

14:30 – 14:45 **COFFEE BREAK**

14:45 – 16:00 **TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS – FCWC Secretariat**

- Recommendations of the WATF – Technical team
 - Requests of the WATF
 - Planning for 2022/timeframe
- Next steps

16:00 – 16:15 **CLOSING REMARKS – FCWC Secretariat, Cote d'Ivoire**

16:15 **END OF THE DAY**

5.3 Attendance list

5.3.1 Member States

BENIN

Akindiki M. Sumadjou
Charge Réglementation DPH/ Benin
Tossi Same Bernard
Chef Division Reg Peche/ DPH

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Koné Aboubakar
Head of department, Port of Abidjan
Maxime Diomande
Head of MCS, Directorate of aquaculture and fisheries
Deleuse Serge Donald
Deputy director in charge of surveillance, Directorate of aquaculture and fisheries
Tago Ile Rocher
Commandant of fleet, National Navy
Fofana Syndou
Head of inspection division, Port of Abidjan

GHANA

Papa Yaw Atobrah
Head, MCS Division
Theodore Kwadjosse
Deputy Head, MCS Division

LIBERIA

Francis Boimah
Transshipment Coordinator, NaFAA
Fritz T Diar
Transshipment officer – Liberia, National Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority

NIGERIA

Paul Opuama
Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Assistant Director
Garba Usman
Head Enforcement MCS – Nigeria, Federal Department of Fisheries, Lagos Office

TOGO

Ahoedo Kossi
Responsible SCS/ Togo
Tchango Yao
Juriste/ DPA/Togo

5.3.2 Observers

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION

Christine Bader
Alix Nasri

5.3.3 Technical Team



Seraphin Dedi
Secretary-General
Felicia Agyei
Secretary
Godfrey Baidoo-Tsibu
RMCSC Coordinator
Ayebaine Ere-Walson
MCS Compliance Coordinator
Vanessa Jaiteh
Researcher
Avitiduen Abisa
Procurement Officer



Per Erik Bergh
Secretary
Malebogo Seofeleng
Projects Administrator



Duncan Copeland
Executive Director
Viviane Koutob
TMT Regional & PESCAO Project Coordinator
Yann Yvergnaux
Analyst



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Norad

The West Africa Task Force brings together the six member countries of the FCWC – Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo – to tackle illegal fishing and fisheries crime. The Task Force is hosted by the FCWC and supported by a Technical Team that includes TM-Tracking (TMT) and Stop Illegal Fishing with funding from Norad. By actively cooperating, by sharing information and by establishing interagency working groups the West Africa Task Force are working together to end illegal fishing.

For more information go to:

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